

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **New family shelter will work to alleviate housing crisis among local families**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Today the Community Shelter Board announced a \$2.2 million award to Volunteers of America of Greater Ohio to address the exponential growth in family homelessness. A new family shelter will address a 65% increase in the last three years in the number of families seeking shelter.

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A renovated building at 595 Van Buren Drive will include the development of a new family shelter with space to serve up to 85 families. This will supplement the YWCA Columbus Family Center, which has been grappling with the increased demand in a facility designed for only 50 families.

Volunteers of America of Greater Ohio is a long-term partner of the Community Shelter Board with a strong track record for quickly re-housing families and veterans experiencing homelessness, as well as a highly experienced shelter provider. Part of a national non-profit organization that has served the most vulnerable populations since 1896, Volunteers of America has become one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive human services organizations and an important partner in efforts to end homelessness in this region.

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"Today's announcement is an important step in dealing with the crisis of families in our community who are experiencing homelessness," said Michelle Heritage, Executive Director of the Community Shelter Board. "Volunteers of America has made huge strides in our community finding housing and giving support to veterans experiencing homelessness. We are pleased that they will grow their services and work on behalf of families. We will rely on their expertise to stabilize families who need their steady hand."

"Quick re-housing will be the central goal of our work with families experiencing homelessness," said Dennis Kresak, President and CEO of Volunteers of America of Greater Ohio. "Follow up case management will assure ongoing stability after the family is housed."

"The YWCA has worked very hard to meet the increased demand among families, but has simply run out of space to serve everyone. They have had to sleep some families on cots in the shelter and at local faith-based congregations, and have even had to resort to using motels," said Michelle Heritage. "An additional facility to meet the sustained increase of families in crisis is essential."

**SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS//**

City of Columbus  
The Columbus Foundation  
Franklin County Board  
of Commissioners  
United Way of Central Ohio

The newly renovated shelter on Van Buren Drive will open in July to serve single adults. The family shelter wing is expected to open in Spring 2015.

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Community Shelter Board, established in 1986, is a collective impact organization that creates collaborations, innovates solutions, and invests in quality programs to end homelessness in Columbus and Franklin County. Community Shelter Board oversees an annual budget of \$31 million to support homeless programs and services. Last year, these programs served more than 10,000 people. The Community Shelter Board is funded by the City of Columbus, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, the United Way of Central Ohio, The Columbus Foundation, Nationwide Insurance Foundation, American Electric Power Foundation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the State of Ohio, and other public and private investors.

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